

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00 EB-08 IO-14 IGA-02
COME-00 TRSE-00 USIA-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
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R 161230Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BISSAU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0833
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BISSAU 0050

ROME FOR FODAG

E. O: 11652:N/A
TAGS: EAID, PU
SUBJ: GUINEA-BISSAU REQUESTS FOOD AID FROM INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

REF: BISSAU 0037

1. NEWLY FORMED GUINEA-BISSAU COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE (REFTEL) FORMALLY REQUESTED HELP FROM INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON JANUARY 13, 1978. APPEAL WAS MADE TO LOCAL DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. COMMITTEE, WHICH IS COMPOSED OF SECRETARIES- GENERAL OF COMMISSARIATS (MINISTRIES) OF HEALTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRANSPORT AND WHICH REPORTS DIRECTLY TO PRINCIPAL COMMISSIONER (PRIME MINISTER) DISTRIBUTED REPORT DESCRIBING SITUATION AND LISTING COUNTRIES NEEDS (COPY AND COMMENTS BEING POUCHED). FURTHER REPORTS AND MEETINGS WERE PROMISED, BUT GOGB CLEARLY HOPES THAT FAVORABLE REPLIES WILL BE FORTHCOMING SOON.

2. COMMITTEE EXPLAINED SITUATION IN SOME DETAIL. POOR RAIN PERFORMANCE (AMOUNT AND IRREGULARITY) LAST YEAR HAS RESULTED IN SERIOUS DECLINE IN PRVEST. SOUTHERN REGIONS OF COUNTRY TAVE EXPERIENCED 50 PERCENT SHORTFALL FROM EX-
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PECTATIONS AND NORTHERN REGIONS (PARTICULARLY OIE, BAFATA, AND GABU) WERE EVEN WORSE WITH CROP FAILURE ESTIMATED AT BETWEEN 70 AND 100 PERCENT. COMMITTEE CLAIMED THAT HUNGER ALREADY APPEARING AMONG LOCAL PLPULATION IN THREE MOST AFFECTED REGIONS, AND THAT THERE ARE REPORTS OF POPULATION MOVEMENTS, INCREASED CHARCOAL BURNINGS, AND OTHER SIGNS OF POTENTIALLY SERIOUS POPULATION AND ECOLOGICAL

DEVELOPMENTS.

3. ACCORDING TO COMMITTEE, AVAILABEL SUPPLIES, INCLUDING 7,000 TONS OF RICE WHICH ARRIVED IN BISSAU JANUARY 8 WILL ENSURE COUNTRY'S MINIMAL NEEDS THROUGH MARCH. (SPEAKER MADE SPECIAL NOTE THAT 2,000 TONS RECEIVED WERE FROM USG AND CONSTITUTED FIRST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE). PROBLEM WILL BE TO MEET FOOD NEEDS FROM THEN UNTIL NEXT CROP DUE IN NOVEMBER 1978. GOGB HAS ESTIMATED REQUIRED IMPORT NEEDS FOR CURRENT YEAR, BUT HAVE NOT YET REFINED FIGURES TO INCLUDE SUPPLIES ALREADY ORDERED BY GOCBMR PROMISED BY DONOR COUNTRIES. COMMITTEE HAS PROMISED TO PROVIDE MORE PRECISE INFORMATION IN NEXT FEW WEEKS.

4. FOOD IMPORT NEEDS FOR CURRENT YEAR AS CALCULATED BY COMMITTEE ARE:

- RICE 48,000 TONS
- CORN 14,000 TONS
- POWDERED OR CANNED MILK 300 TONS
- EDIBLE OILS 2,000 TONS
- WHEAT FLOUR 3,000 TONS
- SUGAR 3,000 TONS
- CANNED MEAT 600 TONS

5. ABOVE FIGURES WILL BE MODIFIED AT LEAST BY RECENTLY RECEIVED SUPPLIES (E.G. AMERICAN RICE) AND OTHER SOURCES
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SO THAT APPROXIMATELY 3/4 OF ABOVE FIGURES REPRESENT MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF FOOD WHICH IS BEING REQUESTED FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES. IN REPLY TO QUESTION, COMMITTEE STATE THAT IMPORTS IF NECESSARY WILL BE PURCHASED BY GOVERNMENT, BUT THIS REQUIRE DIVERSION OF LIMITED FOREIGN EXCHANGE FROM NECESSARY COMMERCIAL IMPORTS AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, HENCE APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE.

6. COMMITTEE REPORT AND PRESENTATION PLACED EMERGENCY REQUEST IN CONTEXT OF GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS SINCE INDEPENDENCE TO REDUCE FOOD IMPORTS AND OBTAIN SELF-SUFFICIENCY WHICH HAD RESULTED IN DECLINE OF RICE IMPORTS TO 10,000 TONS IN 1976. GOGB HAD HOPED FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY AT LEAST WITH RESPECT TO RICE IN 1977 BUT FAILURE OF RAINS HAS FRUSTRATED HOPES. GOVERNMENT IS EQUALLY CONCERNED ABOUT LONG-RANGE EFFORTS OF CURRENT "DISASTER", E.G. ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE, AND DETERMINED TO CONTINUE LONG-RANGE EFFORTS TO RESTRUCTURE AGRICULTURE SO THAT COUNTRY WILL NOT BE AT MERCY OF VARIABLE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS IN FUTURE. COMMITTEE SPOKESMAN REFERRED TO AID CONTOBOEL IRRIGATION PROJECT, WHICH HAS RESULTED IN CONTOBOEL BEING ONLY AREA IN ITS REGION WITH TWO HARVESTS, AS EXAMPLE OF PATH GOVERNMENT POLICY MUST PURSUE ELSEWHERE

IN COUNTRY. IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT WILL ATTEMPT TO
MOBILIZE POPULATION TO CONSERVE AND UTILIZE AVAILABLE
FOOD MORE EFFICIENTLY.

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ROME FOR FODAG

7. FINALLY, COMMITTEE WILL DISTRIBUTE IN VERY NEAR
FUTURE MORE DETAILED REPORTS ON SITUATION, SPECIFICALLY
IN REGARD TO EXPECTED FOOD SUPPLIES. COMMITTEE WILL ATTEMPT
TO COORDINATE INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AND PROMISED TO KEEP DONORS
FULLY ADVISED REGARDING CONTRIBUTIONS, PURCHASES, AND DELIVERY
SCHEDULES.

8. COMMENT: WE WILL PURSUE DISCUSSION WITH COMMITTEE
ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF APPEAL AND NEED AND WILL SUBMIT
OUR RECOMMENDATIONS IN NEAR FUTURE. STEWART

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